GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2570
ANSWERED ON:18.12.2003
WELFARE SCHEME FOR SENIOR CITIZENS
DR. KIRIT SOMAIYA

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether senior citizens federation has made representation to the Government recently to improve the quality of their life;

(b) if so, the details of their difficulties and demands/requests made to the Government; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government on their demands/requests to solve their problems?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI NAGMANI)

(a) The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is the nodal Ministry concerned with the welfare of senior citizens. The Ministry is receiving a number of representations from various senior citizens associations highlighting their problems as well as demands. A list of representations received is enclosed as Annexure-I

(b) Details of demands/requests incorporated in these representations are as under:-

1. National Old Age Pension may be enhanced from Rs. 75/- p.m. to Rs. 500/- p.m.

2. Introduction of 10% Senior Citizens Bonds to help them.

3. The Govt. should declare every 60+ person as Senor Citizen and intimate all the concerned Ministries and State Governments to provide them necessary facilities accordingly.

4. Formulation of a new Medi-claim Insurance Scheme for the Senior Citizens to provide insurance cover during their life with a nominal premia.

5. Old Age Social & Social Income Security (OASIS) should be launched immediately..
6. Implementation of National Policy for Older Persons within the next five years with annual budgetary provision.

7 State/UT Council of older persons be formed including the representatives of Senior Citizens Associations.

8. 33.3% concession in fares of State Transport Buses and 4 Seats in the buses be reserved for Senior Citizens.

9. Identity Cards to all the Senior Citizens of 60+ free of cost/nominal charges.
10. Reservation of beds in public & Private Hospitals for Geriatric cases and Geriatric OPDs.

(c) The Government is keen to solve the problems of the Senior Citizens by giving them certain concessions/facilities.A list of such concessions/facilities being given to Senior Citizens by different ministries/Departments of the Government is enclosed at Annexure-II

Annexure-I

List of Ministries/Departments concerned with the welfare of senior citizens as referred to in reply to Part (c) of the Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1367 regarding Welfare of senior citizens by Shri Rajasekhran, MP(RS)

1. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

2. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

3. Ministry of Finance

4. Ministry of Rural Development

5. Ministry of Urban Development
6. Ministry of Human Resource Development

7 Ministry of Labour

8. Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions

9. Ministry of Law & Justice
10. Ministry of Home Affairs
11. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
12. Ministry of Communication
13. Ministry of Railways
14. Ministry of Surface Transport
15. Ministry of Civil Aviation
16. Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs

ANNEXURE-II

Statement referred to in Part (C) of the LokSabha Unstarred Question No. 2570 for answer on 18th December, 2003, regarding Welfare scheme for senior citizens by Shri Kirit Somaiya, MP(LS).

LIST OF CONCESSIONS AND FACILITIES GIVEN TO OLDER PERSONS BY DIFFERENT MINISTRIES/DEPARTMENTS GOVERNMENT

Sl.No.	Name of the Ministry/Department	Facilities/Benefits given to Senior Citizens
1	Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment	1) Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is the nodal Ministry responsible for welfare of the Senior Citizens. It has announced the National Policy on Older Persons that seeks to assure older persons that their concerns are national concerns and they will not live unprotected, ignored and marginalized. The National Policy aims to strengthen their legitimate place in the society and to help older people to live the last phase of their life with purpose, dignity and peace. The National Policy on Older Persons inter alia visualizes support for financial security, health care and nutrition, shelter, emphasis upon education, training and information needs, provision of appropriate concessions, rebates and discounts etc. to Senior Citizens and special attention to protect and strengthen their legal rights such as to safeguard their life and property. The National Policy on Older Persons recognises of senior citizen to a person who has attained the age of 60 years. 2) The Ministry has also written to all the Ministries/State Governments concerned for adopting a uniform age of 60 years for conferring the status of senior citizen to a person and for extending facilites/concessions to them (copy at Annexure I). 3) The Ministry is also implementing following schemes for the benefit of Senior Citizens: (a) The Scheme of Assistance to Panchayati Raj Institutions/Voluntary Organisations/Self Help Groups for Construction of Old Age Homes/multi-service centres for older persons. Under this Scheme, one time construction grant for old age homes/multi-service centre is provided.

(b) An Integrated Programme for Older Persons has been formulated by revising the earlier scheme of `Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for Programmes relating to the Welfare of the Aged`. Under this Scheme, financial assistance upto 90% of the project cost is provided to NGOs for establishing and maintaining old age homes, day care centres, mobile medicare units and to provide non-institutional services to older persons.

2. Ministry of Rural Development 1) Under the National Old Age Pension Scheme, Central Assistance of Rs. 75/- p.m. is granted to destitute older persons above 65 years. This Scheme has been transferred to the State Plan w.e.f. 2002-03.

2) Under the Annapurna Scheme, free food grains (wheat or rice) upto 10 Kg. Per month are provided to destitute older persons of 65 years or above, who are otherwise eligible for old age pension but are not receiving it. However, the scheme has been transferred to the State Sectors w.e.f. 2002-03

3 Ministry of Finance 1. Section 88 of Finance Act, 1992, provides income tax rebate of upto Rs. 15,000 or actual tax which ever is less to senior citizens who have attained the age of 65 years at any time during the relevant previous year. This has been revised to Rs. 20,000 in the budget for 2003-04. As a result, their income upto Rs. 1.53 lakhs will henceforth become fully exempt from income tax. Hence, effective exemption limit may hereafter be actually higher and is Rs. 1.83 lakh due to standard deduction. They can get further relief by taking advantage through tax rebate under section 88.

2. For Senior Citizens, the deduction in respect of medical insurance premia is upto Rs. 15,000/- under Section 80D.

3. RBI has permitted higher rates of interest on saving schemes of Senior Citizens (persons having the age of 65 years and above). Accordingly, w.e.f 15.05.01, banks permitted 0.5 per cent higher rate of interest on fixed deposits of Senior Citizen aged between 60 to 65 years & 1% higher rate of interest to Senior Citizens above 65 years of age.

4. LIC has launched a special pension policy called Varishta Pension Bima Yojana guaranteeing an annual return of 9% in the form of monthly pension scheme to senior citizens aged 55 years and above.

4 Ministry of Road Transport and Highways Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has informed that a decision has been taken regarding reservation of two seats for senior citizens in front row of the buses of the State Road Transport Undertakings.

5 Ministry of Health & Family Welfare The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, on request from the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, has issued instructions to all State Governments to provide for separate queues for older persons in hospitals for registration and clinical examination.

6 Ministry of Railways a) Indian Railways provide 30% concession in all Mail/Express including Rajdhani/Shatabadi/Jan Shatabadi trains for senior citizens aged 60 years and above.

	b) Indian Railways also have the facility of separate counters for Senior Citizens for purchase/booking/cancellation of tickets.	
7	Ministry of Civil Aviation	1. Indian Airlines is providing 50 per cent Senior Citizen Discount on Normal Economy Class fare for all domestic flights to Indian senior citizens who have completed the age of 65 years in the case of male senior citizens and 63 years in the case of female senior citizens subject to certain conditions
		2. Jet Airways is providing 50 per cent discount on basic fare for all domestic flights in Economy Class to senior citizens having the age of 65 years (male and female).
		3. Sahara India Airlines is providing 50 per cent discount on basic fare for all domestic flights in Economy Class to senior citizens having the age of 62years (men and women)
8.	Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution	The Cabinet has on 5.6.2003 issued necessary guidelines to extend the coverage of the Antyodya Scheme, under which food is provided to destitute old, to cover an additional 50 lakh Below Poverty Line families including 60+ population.
9.	MCD, Delhi	MCD, Delhi, has opened a separate counter for senior citizens for submission of property tax.
10.	Miscellaneous	1. Telephone connection is given on priority to senior citizens of age 65 years and above by the Ministry of Communications.
		2. On the request of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the Hon`ble Chief Justice of India has advised Chief Justices of all High Courts in the country to accord priority to cases involving older persons and ensure their expeditious disposal.